

Pastor Phil's E-note

12/17/2008

To survive compassion fatigue:

- Pray.
- Prioritize.
- Plan your giving.
- Participate.

Compassion Fatigue

On my heart at this time of year is the idea of giving. Of course, our Creator had us on His heart when He sent Jesus as the Savior. Christmas reminds us that God's basic nature is to give, and to give His best.

But I must be honest: I feel overwhelmed at the requests that come our way. We receive at church 1 to 5 requests a day for some type of personal assistance, usually food, gas, medical, rent or utility assistance. Social service agencies that we support are overwhelmed this year more than ever before. Within walking distance of our church is St. Vincent De Paul, Salvation Army, Tree of Life and St. Matthews House. Additionally, The Rotary Club of Naples and their "Kids Against Hunger" program have been asked to supply additional meals for school children who are on the free breakfast/lunch program.

And what of our Southern Baptist missions opportunities? Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong, State Missions, Florida Baptist Children's Home and other worthy endeavors we support through the Cooperative Program, are constantly promoted. Plus, we cooperate with Operation Christmas Child and send shoe boxes around the world.

There are more, but that's a sampling.

And I feel a twinge of guilt that I don't respond to every request fully. I feel I could do more; our church could do more, but how and where? I could be crushed by this ever growing list and bad feeling I'm not doing "enough." Compassion fatigue can set in; that sense that there are more needs than I have resources for.

But then I remember the story of Jesus and His death, burial and resurrection. I am thankful He did not let compassion fatigue overcome Him in the Garden as He faced giving the greatest gift of all. I am grateful that He stayed focused on fulfilling His purpose and did not allow the needs of the world to overwhelm Him. Instead, He completed the task that was given Him by trusting His Father to supply all that was needed. And we are blessed because of it.

How about you? Do you feel overwhelmed by all the "requests"? Do you feel "guilty" when the requests come? If you say yes, here is a way to survive compassion fatigue.

1. Pray. Be sensitive to where God is working and join Him. We can't do everything but we can do something. God will show you in prayer where you can give. Ask God for His strength and compassion for those in need. This is what Jesus did when He prayed in the Garden. In that prayer, He found the strength and compassion to bring to us the greatest gift of all.



"Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matthew 25:40)

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East Naples Baptist Church
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2. **Prioritize.** Storehouse tithing is the first Biblical priority. Put this first on your list – giving to the local church. Then ask God where you can give an offering of time, talent or treasure.
3. **Plan your giving.** Set out a 1-year, 3-year and 5-year plan. It may be you can participate more fully on a rotating basis when you have a clear plan of giving in place. Some areas you will want to give every year, others may be every other year or every third year. God will guide if you will ask Him to help you. Put your plan and priorities on paper and commit it to God.
4. **Participate.** By all means participate in the opportunities afforded at East Naples Baptist Church and other ministry opportunities. For when each of us does our part, whether great or small, God blesses those we touch. What you cannot give in dollars, you can give in volunteer hours.

I hope this helps as you overcome compassion fatigue and enter into joyous giving and living. Remember, when you have done it to the least of these, you have done it unto Him.

Your friend and pastor,

Phil



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We're on the Web!
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